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June 30, 2005

**ROCKFORD MAN SENTENCED TO 72 MONTHS IMPRISONMENT
ON FEDERAL GUN CHARGES**

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ANDREW L. TRAVER, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives; PAUL A. LOGLI, Winnebago County State's Attorney; and STEVEN PUGH, Chief of the Rockford Police Department, today made the following announcement:

United States District Judge Philip G. Reinhard today sentenced **ARTURO VILLALVAZO**, 26 (DOB: 03/16/1978), formerly of Rockford, to 72 months in federal prison without parole for being a felon in possession of a firearm. He also was sentenced to three years of supervised release following his release from prison and to pay a \$200 fine. A second defendant, **DENARDO BETHANY**, 28 (DOB: 05/17/1976), of 1111 South Independence Avenue, Rockford, Illinois, was sentenced on June 2, 2005 to 18 months of imprisonment for possessing the same firearm after previously being convicted domestic battery.

At the time of his guilty plea on April 28, 2005, Villalvazo admitted that on May 4, 2004, his co-defendant, Denardo Bethany, came to Villalvazo's residence in Rockford, and the two of them left in the vehicle that Bethany was driving. Villalvazo admitted that Bethany was stopped by a Rockford Police Officer for a traffic violation. Villalvazo admitted that prior to the officer approaching the vehicle on May 4, 2004, Bethany provided Villalvazo a Glock .40 caliber, Model 22 pistol which Villalvazo placed under the passenger seat of the vehicle. The Glock handgun was later seized by the Rockford Police Department officer. Villalvazo admitted that prior to his possession of the Glock handgun on May 4, 2004, he had been convicted of a felony.

First charged by the Winnebago County States Attorney's Office under state law, Villalvazo was transferred to federal court where he was charged under tough federal firearms laws as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods program. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an intensive, cooperative effort between local, state, and federal law enforcement to attack gun crimes. Additional information about Project Safe Neighborhoods may be found at www.psn.gov.

The case was investigated by the Rockford Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, & Explosives, and the Rockford Police Department, and prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph C. Pedersen.

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